



American Academy of Pediatrics “What’s the Latest With the Flu” Message for Caregivers/Teachers

2014-2015 Influenza Season

The 2014-2015 influenza season ([flu](#)) is here. The flu virus can easily spread from one person to the next, and can cause serious illness that might result in hospitalization or even death. Therefore, it’s critically important for everyone to get vaccinated for seasonal influenza now.

Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for all people 6 months of age and older. This is especially important for children at highest risk. Children under age 5 years are great transmitters of the virus and are at the highest risk of complications from influenza, especially those under 24 months. In addition, all household contacts and out-of-home care providers (including pregnant women) of young children should receive an influenza vaccine each year. When children and child care providers get vaccinated, both are less likely to become ill. This decreases everyone’s exposure to the influenza viruses, and results in fewer children and childcare providers becoming ill.

Pregnant caregivers are at higher risk of severe illness from influenza. Flu shots may be given to pregnant women at any time during pregnancy. The vaccine will protect expecting mothers and their unborn babies, and will help protect their newborn baby in the first few months of life.

Steps to Help Your Program Prepare

1. Examine and revise the program’s [written plan for seasonal flu](#).
2. Schedule [influenza prevention education](#) for staff. Review policies on [hand washing](#); [cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting surfaces and toys](#); and excluding [children](#) and [caregivers](#) who are sick.
3. Display educational materials to encourage proper hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
4. Help families and communities understand the important roles they can play in reducing the spread of flu. Review the [fact sheet](#) and plan to distribute a customized [letter](#) to parents about influenza prevention and control practices in your program.
5. Update family contact information and [child records](#), so parents can be reached quickly if they need to pick up their sick child.
6. Encourage all staff, children, and parents to plan to get the [flu vaccine](#) as soon as it is available in their community. Everyone needs a flu vaccine each year, even when the virus strains in the vaccine do not change from the previous year, because immunity may wear off over time.
7. Be strategic in regards to children at highest risk, ie those with conditions that increase the risk of complications from influenza [e.g., asthma, diabetes mellitus, hemodynamically significant cardiac disease, immunosuppression or neurologic and neurodevelopmental disorders]; Encourage parents to talk early with their child’s pediatrician or medical subspecialist about seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as it is available and when to consider treatment with an antiviral medicine if they develop influenza-like illness.
8. Take the free AAP/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention online course “[Influenza Prevention & Control: Strategies for Early Education & Child Care Providers](#)”.

Resources

[AAP Caring for Our Children](#)

[AAP Healthy Child Care America](#)

[AAP Preparing Child Care Programs for Pandemic and Seasonal Influenza](#)

[AAP Preventing the Flu: Resources for Parents and Child Care Providers](#)

[CDC Fact Sheet No More Excuses: You Need a Flu Vaccine!](#)

[Families Fighting Flu](#)

[Flu Information – Free Print Materials](#)

[Prevent Childhood Influenza](#)



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